

Frimley, UK
January 8, 2017

Siemens blade transformed into major artwork for Hull UK City of Culture

Siemens is getting behind the Hull UK City of Culture programme by backing a major artwork that has been installed into the heart of the city. Siemens is backing the installation of 'Blade' by multi-media artist Nayan Kulkarni, who has reinterpreted a 75m long wind turbine blade as a monumental sculpture installed across the historic Queen Victoria Square.

Nayan Kulkarni's artwork has transformed this example of modern technology into a jaw dropping contemporary art installation that offers a dramatic counterpoint to some of Hull's fine architecture and heritage. Kulkarni's 'Blade' is the first artwork in Look Up, a year-long series of artist interventions in public spaces commissioned by Hull UK City of Culture 2017, which aim to make people look at and experience the city in new ways. The surprise installation took place today (January 8) after the blade, which is one of the first to be made in Hull, was transported under cover of darkness for three and a half miles from the new Siemens factory through city streets Queen Victoria Square. It is believed to be the first time such a huge industrial structure has been manoeuvred into a city centre to be displayed as a temporary art installation.

Mounted on specially-constructed supports, at the highest point it is more than 5.5 metres from the ground, allowing double-decker buses to pass under the tip of the blade.

The blade is one of the first of hundreds to be manufactured every year for Siemens' industry-leading 7MW and next-generation 8MW turbines at the company's recently-opened factory in Hull.

Siemens is a Major Partner of Hull UK City of Culture 2017 and the installation is part of its contribution to the cultural and artistic programme. Appropriately, Blade forms part of the Made in Hull season.

Siemens UK Chief Executive Juergen Maier said: "We're hugely excited to have worked with Nayan Kulkarni and the City of Culture team on this dramatic, unique installation.

"This collaboration reflects our desire to make a positive impact as a Hull UK City of Culture 2017 Major Partner. 'Blade' brings to life the engineering and manufacturing excellence of which we are so proud and makes it tangible for the people of Hull and visitors to the city.

“It feels perfect that ‘Blade’ – one of hundreds of 75 metre blades we will manufacture in Hull every year – will be a prominent feature during the City of Culture Made in Hull season. We hope people enjoy it.

“When people see our blades close up they often comment on how beautifully crafted they are. This installation will enable many thousands of people to appreciate that beauty and scale in the very heart of the city.”

The blade was applauded into the city centre by a welcoming party of 200 workers from the Siemens factory, reflecting the pride of the workforce that the product they create will be seen by tens of thousands of local people and visitors to the city.

The artist, Nayan Kulkarni, said: “By declaring the blade to be a work of art, we’re changing it. It’s no longer a functional object – it does other things and has different values. As both a turbine blade and a readymade sculptural work of art it is beautiful.

“As an artwork it challenges the way you think about form and about the city. It also brings to attention people’s physical labour and makes an impressive, public statement about that.

“The whole team at Siemens has been amazing. Whenever they’ve been asked to do something or enable something, they have said yes. I think the project is extraordinary. It’s an astonishing challenge to move something of this size into the city centre.”

Andy Yates, a Team Lead in the Finishing department, said: “To place such a huge structure as a centrepiece of the City of Culture is a magnificent statement for Siemens and for Hull. Siemens investing in Hull and Hull being the UK City of Culture go hand in hand, because they are the best things to happen to the city for many, many years.

“I’m personally very proud to have played a part in creating what has become a unique art installation as part of the City of Culture. If this inspires people to think differently and not just accept the norm, from an industrial or artistic point of view, then that’s a good thing.”

Packing Operative Vicky Arnold said: “This is a brilliant way of showing what we do. Thousands of people will be able see the blade up close and perhaps millions more will see pictures and film of it via the media.

“I work on blades every day, but that doesn’t stop me wanting to see this blade in a different environment and wanting to see people’s reactions to it.”

The installation is also supported by the Green Port Hull partnership which has a vision to establish Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire as a world-class centre for renewable energy, creating wealth and employment for the region.

Moving and installing the blade has involved over a year of planning, also involving Hull City Council, project consulting engineers Arup, the police and heavy lift and transportation specialist ALE.

Dave Smith, ALE Projects Operational Manager, said: "This was a unique challenge. We have never before moved a structure of this size into a city centre along such narrow streets.

"We're delighted to have been entrusted by Siemens to take the blade on its journey into the city centre and to have lifted it into position where it will take pride of place during the City of Culture celebrations."

Martin Green, CEO and Director Hull 2017, said: "We are delighted to be working with our Major Partner Siemens on this extraordinary project. Nayan Kulkarni's Blade is a dramatic, yet graceful addition to Hull's city centre. Despite its size, what is striking about the sculpture is its elegance. Putting this example of state of the art technology against the historic charms of Queen Victoria Square makes you look at this fine public space differently."

Siemens and partner Associated British Ports have invested £310m to create world class and world scale wind power manufacturing and logistics operations at Alexandra Dock in Hull.

The Siemens site in Hull will employ 1,000 people once it is fully operational later this year. It is one of Siemens' largest investments worldwide in manufacturing facilities and is Hull's biggest-ever inward investment.

For further information about the Siemens Hull project please go to www.siemens.co.uk/hull

-ENDS-

Contacts for journalists:

John Meehan, of Meehan Media & Comms (on behalf of Siemens Plc)

Tel: 01482 223479

Mobile: 07803 199492

E-mail: john@meehanmedia.co.uk

Anne Keogh, Siemens plc

Tel: 01276 696312

Mobile: 07808 823545

E-mail: anne.keogh@siemens.com

Guy Dorrell, Siemens plc

Tel: 07808 823177

E-mail: guy.dorrell@siemens.com

For further information and **press pictures**, please see: www.siemens.co.uk/press

Follow us on Twitter at: www.twitter.com/siemensuknews

About Siemens

Siemens AG (Berlin and Munich) is a global technology powerhouse that has stood for engineering excellence, innovation, quality, reliability and internationality for more than 165 years. The company is active in more than 200 countries, focusing on the areas of electrification, automation and digitalization. One of the world's largest producers of energy-efficient, resource-saving technologies, Siemens is a leading supplier of efficient power generation and power transmission solutions and a pioneer in infrastructure solutions as well as automation, drive and software solutions for industry. The company is also a leading provider of medical imaging equipment – such as computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging systems – and a leader in laboratory diagnostics as well as clinical IT. In fiscal 2016, which ended on September 30, 2016, Siemens generated revenue of €79.6 billion and net income of €5.6 billion. At the end of September 2016, the company had around 351,000 employees worldwide. Further information is available on the Internet at www.siemens.com.

About Hull UK City of Culture

Hull UK City of Culture 2017 is a 365 day programme of cultural events and creativity inspired by the city and told to the world. Hull secured the title of UK City of Culture 2017 in November 2013. It is only the second city to hold the title and the first in England.

Divided into four seasons, this nationally significant event draws on the distinctive spirit of the city and the artists, writers, directors, musicians, revolutionaries and thinkers that have made such a significant contribution to the development of art and ideas.

The Culture Company was set up to deliver the Hull 2017 programme and is an independent organisation with charitable status. It has raised £32 million, with over 60 partners supporting the project, including public bodies, lottery distributors, trusts and foundations and local and national businesses. Key contributions are coming from: **Host City** – Hull City Council; **Principal Partners** - Arts Council England, BBC, Big Lottery Fund, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, KCOM, KWL, Spirit of 2012, Yorkshire Water and the University of Hull; **Major Partners** – Associated British Ports, Arco, BP, the British Council, Green Port Hull, Hull Clinical Commissioning Group, MKM Building Supplies, P&O Ferries, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Sewell Group, Siemens, Smith & Nephew and Wykeland Group.

68 per cent of the funding is dedicated to public facing activities, including the widest range of cultural events in every corner of the city, with a further 11 per cent for legacy and contingency. More than £5 million is being invested in volunteering, learning and community engagement. £1.6 million is being invested to ensure a legacy after 2017. This includes capacity building, such as supporting existing events so they can grow, staging curtain-raiser events, developing future programming for after 2017 and building a new platform to support a unified ticketing system for the city.

Hull 2017's International Partners are: Aarhus, Denmark, which is European Capital of Culture 2017; Reykjavik, Iceland; Rotterdam, The Netherlands; and Freetown, Sierra Leone (twinned with Hull). These relationships are reflected in a number of events throughout the year.

For information go to www.hull2017.co.uk

Follow us on **Twitter** @2017Hull **Instagram** @2017hull **Facebook** HullCityofCulture